

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 26-33 are pending in the application, with claims 1-22 and 26-30 being withdrawn from consideration pursuant to a previous restriction/election of species requirement and claim 31 being allowed.¹ Applicants request reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

Oath/Declaration

According to the Office Action, the Oath/Declaration filed in this application is defective. Applicants will file a proper, Supplemental Declaration upon receiving indication that all pending claims are deemed to be allowable.

Specification

The specification is objected to on the alleged basis that it provides no support for the cam protrusions recited at line 4 of claim 33.² Applicants respectfully disagree. The cam protrusions are described at page 21, lines 4-9 and illustrated at Figure 16 (reference numeral 136). Accordingly, Applicants submit that the objection is overcome.³

Claim Rejections/Response to Arguments

The subject matter of claims 32 and 33 (corresponding to previously cancelled claims 23 and 24, respectively) is again rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Estabrook et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,911,706. Applicants disagree.

¹ The Office Action Summary again incorrectly indicates that claims 1-31 are pending in the Application.

² Claim 33 should theoretically be rejected on the same basis but is not.

³ Claim 33 is amended simply for consistent terminology.

In rejecting the claims, the Examiner asserts that Estabrook discloses all of the claim-recited limitations, including a “collet comprising a slit sleeve having fingers which, when engaged by a surface of [the] lock member, are compressed radially inwardly against the catheter.” Although the Examiner again provides the same labeled copies of Estabrook Figures 2A and 2B as before, the Examiner has not illustrated – either in the figures or by textual demonstration – the claim-specified features that 1) the collet is a slit sleeve having fingers; and 2) when the fingers of the collet are engaged by a surface of the lock member (e.g., the cam protrusions recited in claim 34), the fingers are compressed radially inwardly. Applicants respectfully submit that the reason the Examiner has not shown this is because Estabrook does not, in fact, anticipate the claims.

In particular, what the Examiner has characterized in Estabrook as the claim-recited lock member is a ring seal 92, which “prevents leakage as the cannula is removed after use.” See column 9, lines 66-67 of Estabrook. The Examiner further characterizes an annular edge of the Estabrook ring seal as constituting the “protrusions” recited in claim 33. However, the annular edge of the Estabrook ring seal bears against the needle/cannula, not against the fingers of the collet as recited in claim 33. Moreover, the Examiner characterizes the “needle alignment means 50” in Estabrook (see column 9, lines 62-63) as the claim-recited collet. Applicants note, however, that what the Examiner has construed as the claim-recited lock member – the ring seal 92 – does not compress any portion of the needle alignment means 50 “radially inwardly against the catheter,” as recited in claim 32, nor does any other component of Estabrook.

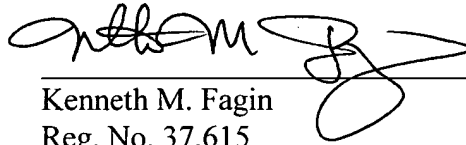
In short, the Examiner either seemingly misunderstands what a collet is or, perhaps more likely, is simply picking and choosing components shown in Estabrook and attempting to force-fit the claim limitations onto those components. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that

the Examiner's interpretation of the Estabrook components as meeting the claim limitation is flawed for at least the reasons noted above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection and request that it be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims under consideration are directed to allowable subject matter, and timely and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

2/11/05
February 11, 2005


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